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C O N F I D E N T I A L VILNIUS 000622

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IR](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN LOOKING TO DEVELOP COMMERCIAL TIES WITH
LITHUANIA

REF: A. DAS JONES - EMBASSY EMAIL EXCHANGE
[B](#). TIRANA 727
[C](#). RIGA 507

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief John Finkbeiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Action request -- see paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) On November 18 poloffs met with MFA,s Head of Middle East and Africa Division Laima Jureviciene to inquire whether Iran has approached Lithuania to offer enhanced commercial relations (further to above references). Jureviciene confirmed that the GOL received a letter from Iran's Deputy Minister for Europe on November 17th offering to come to Vilnius to discuss bilateral trade opportunities. The GOL has not yet responded to the offer, she added. Iran's previous Deputy Minister for Europe made a similar offer to visit last year but the GOL declined. Jureviciene said that the outgoing Iranian Ambassador to Poland (who is also accredited to Lithuania) plans to visit Vilnius this month.

[1](#)3. (C) Jureviciene asked our opinion on the right level of GOL representation for these meetings. We responded that any meeting with Foreign Minister Usackas would send the wrong message, and suggested that a lower-ranked official would be more appropriate, should the GOL decide that a meeting is necessary at all. We offered to meet with the MFA prior to any meetings with Iranian officials to provide updated information regarding Iran's nuclear program and Iran's attempts to transport arms and illicit items through commercial routes.

[1](#)4. (C) The Ambassador took the opportunity of a meeting with Foreign Minister Usackas on November 20 to underscore U.S. concerns about Iranian attempts to seek enhanced commercial ties with Lithuania, especially given how Iran has used such ties in the past to attempt to evade UNSC sanctions. Usackas confirmed that no decision had been made yet regarding a meeting. He suggested that Lithuania did not intend to make any promises with the Iranian deputy minister should such a meeting occur. Usackas speculated that Iran wanted to discuss with the GOL the "Viking Project", a joint Lithuanian-Ukrainian-Belarusian project to develop a container train link between Odessa, Ukraine and Klaipeda, Lithuania, transiting Belarus. Iran may be interested in the project as a means of transporting Iranian goods to Europe.

[1](#)5. (C) Action request: Embassy would appreciate Department guidance and talking points to provide to Minister Usackas and other MFA officials in advance of any meetings with Iranian officials.
DERSE